

COURT MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR

DEFINITION

Under direction, plans, organizes and directs the investigation of requests for petitions for court ordered psychiatric evaluations; assists in other mental health related activities as approved by Court administration; has statutorily limited powers of a peace officer relating to judicially ordered commitments; and performs related duties as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This single position class is a fully qualified licensed counselor and is characterized by administrative responsibility for mental health evaluations within Family and Children Court Services. It differs from the class of Assistant Mental Health Counselor in that the latter's primary function is to conduct mental health evaluations to determine the mental status of persons alleged to be mentally disabled.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

1. Recommends policies and procedures in compliance with state mental health laws and the policies and rules of the Court for the operation of the work unit; reviews legislation related to Mental Health services and makes recommendations.
2. Plans, develops, coordinates and implements all Mental Health services; evaluates existing Mental Health services and recommends policy and organizational changes; coordinates activities with other work units within Family and Children Services.
3. Determines if court-ordered petitions should be filed; interviews persons making allegations; checks medical, psychiatric and legal history of potential patient; interviews potential patient and evaluates mental status of potential patient.
4. Ensures that persons alleged to be mentally disabled have been informed of their legal rights.
5. Investigates alternatives to court-ordered evaluations; conducts office and field investigations to evaluate alleged disordered person's home environment; explores possibility of voluntary treatment; provides immediate counseling in crisis situations.

6. Approves filing of petition for court-ordered evaluations after investigation and determination that action is warranted; makes referrals to appropriate treatment sources when petitions are denied.
7. Presents oral and written reports and recommendations to the court in petition cases; maintains case documentation, prepares reports, and writes routine correspondence; attends and participates in case management meetings and presentations.
8. Performs related duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Master's degree in psychology, counseling, social work or other directly related field and five years of increasingly responsible professional experience evaluating acutely psychotic persons, preferably in both inpatient and outpatient settings similar in nature to the population being served or any combination of training and experience that could provide the desired knowledge and abilities. Special requirement: Possession of a license issued by the State of California as a Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Marriage, Family and Child Therapist (LFMT), or Clinical Psychologist.

Knowledge of

Program management practices and techniques; principles and practices of mental health; adult psychopathology; psychological and socio-economics of the family unit; characteristics and signs of abuse, domestic violence and substance abuse; clinical issues relating to family dysfunctional behavior/development; governmental and private community resources and referral agencies; legal terminology, court operations and courtroom procedure; courtroom etiquette and conventions.

Ability to

Plan, organize and manage program operations and implement program revisions; supervise, train, and review the work of others; make sound and objective decisions; evaluate program procedures and effectiveness; understand laws and statutes as related to mental health; reach logical and sound conclusions based on evaluation of facts and conflicting information; establish rapport with clients; facilitate individual problem recognition, identification and solution; effectively conduct interviews under stressful and/or hostile circumstances; put emotional and hostile individuals at ease; tactfully deal with others in a pleasant and non-confrontational manner; identify and utilize support services and community resources; establish and work cooperatively with representatives of other organizations; prepare concise reports and records; make formal oral and written presentations; apply research principles and methods; manage time in a heavy work

schedule; prioritize case work; effectively communicate with people of diverse socio-economic backgrounds and temperaments.

Special Requirements

A California driver's license requirement will be reviewed on a position basis in accordance with ADA regulations.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Strength, dexterity, coordination and vision to use a keyboard and video display terminal on a daily basis. Hearing to communicate with the public and court staff. Dexterity and coordination to handle files and single pieces of paper; occasional lifting of objects weighing up to 25 lbs. such as files, stacks of papers, reference and other materials. Moving from place to place within an office; some reaching for items above and below desk level.

Date Est. 4/00

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